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Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CEQ-01 EPA-01
SMI-01 INT-05 EB-08 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 IO-13 L-03 DLOS-09 DODE-00 AF-10 NEA-10
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P R 220618Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9990
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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C O R R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 2294 VICE 1256)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EFIS, SENV, KS
SUBJ: WHALE CONSERVATION MEASURES

REF: A) STATE 66740, B) SEOUL 1256

1. ON MARCH 16, EMBOFF TOOK OCCASION TO REVIEW AT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MOFA) PAST US EXHORTATIONS RE PROMPT ROKG ENTRY INTO THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION. DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION, GAVE ASSURANCES THAT THERE IS NO INTERNAL ISSUE PREVENTING ROKG FROM JOINING IWC. HOWEVER, HE OBSERVED THAT "THE REAL PROBLEM" IS THAT EVEN IF ROK JOINED IWC, IT WOULD BE CERTAIN NOT REPEAT NOT TO RECEIVE ANY QUOTAS WHICH WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM JAPAN AND/OR THE USSR, AND IT CANNOT PRECIPITOUSLY ABANDON WHALING IN THE ABSENCE OF ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT FOR THOSE INVOLVED.

2. DIRECTOR STATED THAT ONLY 21 VESSELS ARE ENGAGED THIS
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YEAR, REPERESENTING A DECREASE OF 3 FROM 1976. EIGHTEEN VESSELS ARE ONE-BOAT VENTURES AND ONE COMPANY OPERATES 3 BOATS. HE STATED THAT THE ROKG WOULD CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE EXIT FROM WHALING AS OTHER OCCUPATIONS COULD BE FOUND.

3. IN FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION MARCH 20 AT THE OFFICE OF FISHERIES AFFAIRS (OFA), EMBOFF WAS INFORMED THAT OFA FULLY

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ENDORSES ENTRY INTO IWC. IN ADDITION TO USG PRESSURE, ROKG IS ALSO BEING "THREATENED" BY THE UK, JAPAN, AND PERU INTO JOINING THE IWC, AND VARIOUS GROUPS HAVE STIMULATED US SCHOOL CHILDREN TO WRITE TO OFA RE WHALING.

4. SENIOR OFA INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ADVISOR REITERATED THAT ROKG HAS NO REPEAT NO DESIRE TO HARM THE MAMMALIAN POPULATION OF THE SEA OF JAPAN, AND IS IN FACT LICENSING, CONTROLLING NUMBERS OF WHALES AND VESSELS, AREAS OF CATCH, AND OTHERWISE RESTRICTING OFFSHORE WHALING ACTIVIITES IN ITS OWN WATERS. NEVERTHELESS, IT DOES NOT BELIEVE THE POWER OF THE STATE CAN LEGITIMATELY BE USED TO ARBITRARILY DENY THE FISHERMEN INVOLVED OF THEIR TRADITIONAL RIGHTS TO EARN THEIR LIVELIHOODS IN THE ABSENCE OF ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT THAT SIMPLY DOES NOT EXIST AT THIS TIME.

5. HE EXPRESSED SADNESS THAT DESPITE ROKG'S BEST EFFORTS USG APPEARS DISPOSED TO REGARD KOREAN CATCH AS UNACCEPTABLE, WHILE THE SOVIETS, JAPAN, NORWAY AND SOUTH AFRICA ARE TRACKING WHALE RESOURCES ACROSS THE SEAS IN "MULTI-THOUSAND TON" MOTHERSHIPS WITH FLEETS OF CATCHER VESSELS ANY OF WHICH IS FAR LARGER THAN THE 100-TON LIMIT PLACED ON ROK WHALERS WHICH ARE ALLOWED TO GO NO FURTHER THAN 100 MILES OFFSHORE.

6. HE CONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS THAT 2,000 TONS OF WHALE MEAT WAS EXPORTED TO JAPAN IN 1977, WHILE THE OIL AND OTHER BY-
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PRODUCTS WERE USED IN KOREAN COSMETICS AND OTHER INDUSTRIES. HE SUGGESTED THAT JAPAN IS USING ITS POSITION AS A MEMBER OF IWC TO THREATEN CUTOFF OF ROK MEAT EXPORTS UNLESS ROKG JOINS IWC. IN THAT CASE, HE NOTED, IT IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR THAT JAPAN WOULD BE WILLING OR ABLE TO REDUCE ITS OWN QUOTAS TO SHARE WITH KOREA OR THAT SOVIETS WOULD BE OTHER THAN HOSTILE TO ROKG ENTRY.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY USG ANALYSIS WHICH WOULD BE HELPFUL IN PERSUADING THE ROKG. IN PARTICULAR, WE THINK IT IMPORTANT TO VERIFY WHETHER THE USSR WOULD OPPOSE ROK ENTRY TO THE IWC AND WHETHER SOVS AND THE JAPANESE WOULD BE WILLING TO SHARE SOME QUOTA WITH KOREA. ROKG INTEREST IS STRONGLY CENTERED ON WHETHER IT MIGHT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN ENOUGH WHALE QUOTA TO MAINTAIN THE SUBSISTENCE OF ITS PRESENT WHALING FAMILIES UNTIL OTHER OCCUPATIONS CAN BE FOUND FOR THEM.
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